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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001008

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [MASS](#) [IZ](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH MOD STAFF CONFIRM PLANS FOR EXTENSION OF
IRAQ DEPLOYMENT

REF: A. PRAGUE 948

[1](#)B. STATE 111082

Classified By: Acting DCM Mike Dodman for reasons 1.4 b+d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Czech MOD senior officials offered assurances that plans for extension of the Czech military police trainers currently in Iraq are continuing, and that the contingent would remain in its current status, i.e., part of MNF-I, but with the hope that they would "eventually" be moved under the NATO Training Mission. Czech planning is based on extension of UNSCR 1546. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) ADCM and DATT met June 29 with Czech MOD Director of Security Policy Zdenek Borkovec to follow-up on Ambassador's June 21 meeting with DefMin Kuehnl (ref A). During that meeting, Kuehnl had expressed reservations about Czech troops remaining in Iraq if they remained part of MNF-I. Borkovec stated clearly that the Czech Army and MOD staff are proceeding on the assumption that the deployment of 95 military police near Basra will be extended through 2006, and will remain in its current form. Borkovec shared a copy of the draft bill authorizing 2006 deployments, which uses the exact same language as the most recent extension in Jan 2005. Specifically, the troops will serve in Iraq with the expectation that they will "eventually" become part of the NATO Training Mission.

[1](#)3. (C) Borkovec noted that the question of whether the Czech trainers are under MNF-I or NTM-I was, for him, purely a political one. As Minister Kuehnl noted, and as is well understood by all involved in the debate, some Czech politicians continue to question the MNF-I's mandate, and it would therefore be politically expedient if there concerns were addressed by moving the Czech contingent firmly under MNF-I. However, there is broad expectation that the deployment extension will receive support from the opposition ODS (a stance that all of our ODS contacts regularly confirm), so that a few abstentions or even defections from the ruling coalition would not doom the extension.

[1](#)4. (C) Borkovec added that the deployment legislation is predicated on UNSCR 1546, i.e., that it will be extended beyond December 2005 or there will be a "suitable replacement."

[1](#)5. (C) Borkovec confirmed that the few Czech surgeons at a British military hospital in Iraq would not be extended next year.

[1](#)6. (C) Turning back to the USG proposals on the future of the Iraq coalition (ref B), Borkovec inquired about the specific plans for coalition "transition teams," in particular whether they would be involved in combat operations. We referred MOD staff to the President's 28 June speech at Fort Bragg for the latest thinking. Borkovec said the Czechs would have to "consider" whether and how to engage in such transition teams, and looked forward to continuing the discussion as planning evolves.

[1](#)7. (C) Comment: Based on several discussions with MOD and MFA staff in recent weeks, it appears that Minister Kuehnl's hesitation about MNF-I does not reflect a shift in GOCR views. Nonetheless, given the fluid political situation here, we will continue to monitor the 2006 deployment plan as it makes its way forward. We note as well concern about UNSCR 1546, which the MFA has stressed will be an important part of any debate over Iraq deployment.
CABANISS